



FACTORS AFFECTING THE TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS GIRL CHILD EDUCATION AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Abstract

There has been gender discrimination for centuries in many parts of the world. In many cultures, the girl child is considered inferior to the boy child and is not given the same opportunities. Girls are often left behind when it comes to education, and this has serious consequences. Not only do girls miss out opportunities in the workforce, but they also tend to fare worse in terms of health, well-being and even happiness. Girls have an increased chance of success, if they receive an education that meets their individual needs and interests. To increase the status of girls' education in society, all the stakeholders, viz., the teachers, parents, girl students themselves, the policy makers and the society should work hand-in-hand. At secondary stage of education teachers play a significant role in the education of children during the crucial period of development. The researchers felt that it would be useful to conduct a study on girl child education. The present study is an attempt to explore the attitude of teachers towards girl child education at secondary level. The researchers used Descriptive Survey method for the present investigation. The data were collected using a well-developed and standardized questionnaire from a sample of 500 teachers (50 Headmasters and 450 School Assistants) working in the Secondary Schools located in the Rural as well as Urban areas in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. Mean score values, standard deviations, t-tests were used for analysis of data. The findings of the study revealed that the demographic variables – gender, age, designation and location of the institution have no influence on the teachers' attitude towards girl child education at secondary level.

Key words: Teachers, Girl Child Education, Secondary Schools, Technical Education

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Introduction

Educating the girl child leads to every perspective of education that strives at improving the skill and experience of girls. It includes the general education provided at schools and colleges; professional education, vocational education and technical education etc., provided by the respective institutions. Education is a vital part of a living being, whether it is a boy or a girl. Education assists an individual to be smarter, to learn new things, and to know about the facts around the world. Girl child education is a pivot for families, communities and societies today. Girls who are able to get educated will be able to join the workforce, earn livelihood, take care of their families and get married at a mature and responsible age. Thus, they can build better future for themselves, their families and the society at large.

IMPORTANCE OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN SOCIETY

In some parts of the world, strict rules govern how girls must behave and what they can or cannot learn. Girls who live in such an environment may be unable to fully participate in typical school activities and may have difficulty developing their full potential as individuals. Girls have an innate ability to think deeply about complex issues and solve problems. They also have a wide range of skills, knowledge and abilities that can be developed with the right opportunities. Furthermore, girls play a vital role in society and their contributions deserve recognition. If all people – including girls – had access to education and opportunity, our world would be a much better place. Our duty to teach girls is to remove the obstacles that have prevented them from reaching their full potential and give us a world of less inequality. A girl child is in no way inferior to a male child in all respects. In this context, it should be remembered that when a boy is educated in a family, it is understood that he himself is educated. On the other hand, when a girl child is educated, the whole family is said to be educated.

Girl child education is very crucial to make a nation strong. Education is essential for every individual living in the country irrespective of the fact whether the individual is a boy or a girl. Girls' education is an important step for the prosperity of a nation. The importance of girls' education can be understood in the light of the following aspects.

1. Providing assistance in building stable communities

Education offers strength and versatility which allows the nation to improve at a quicker rate from any dispute. The overall quality education can even assist prevent disputes in the first place by giving knowledge on social skills, problem-solving, and critical thinking at the schools.

2. Promoting gender equality

In today's society, gender inequality continues to be a prevalent problem because of the persistent gap in terms of access to chances for women and men. Gender equality is a basic human right that every human being is entitled to regardless of race, sexuality, ethnicity, or religion. The role men and women play in society is completely determined and as a result, there is a gender gap. When girls in our community are more educated, more influence is placed on gender equality. As women get equality, human rights become a powerful value of societies as women in governance tend to fight for underprivileged groups. Women's leadership in government also becomes more prevalent, and when women lead, women push for more impartial rules of governance.

3. Allowing girls to make their own decision

Educated girls gave higher courage and independence to make decisions that change their lives. They are better promoted to examine the social imperative that women reside in the home, growing children and attending to the regular household duties. Education enables young women to think beyond cultural standards and continue their desires for a better life.

4. Strengthening economies and advances the fight to eradicate poverty

One of the clearest and obvious benefits of educating girl is the prospect for the economic development of a country. This even affects the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rate with an increase in women education participation. When women of a country are learned and educated, the whole economy of the nation gets developed and flourished.

5. Fostering Positive change among future generations

The educated girl becomes an educated woman. Offering girls with education is a primary step in developing future generations with healthy, educated and empowering girls. Educated women of

the community can become future leaders, direct towards transformation, and build more powerful and significant societies. Any nation is regarded as wealthy only when its citizens, particularly women are well educated.

6. Providing opportunity to opt for a profession of her choice

The girl child should be given an opportunity to select the profession of her choice through education. The educated girls can demonstrate to be strong in their selected professions. When the girl child has the chance to be educated in the field of her interest, it offers her the better opportunity to become a successful engineer, doctor, or the choice of the profession she wishes.

7. Leading a healthy and better life

Educating a girl child results in the improvement of the life-style of the entire family. The girl can read and learn about her rights. They won't be trodden down with regard to their rights. There will be a general improvement in the life-style of women altogether. Educated girls bring an awareness among the members of the family towards the importance of health and hygiene.

Though girl child education has its importance in the prosperity of a nation, there are several obstacles that come in the way of women education.

Obstacles that come in the way of Girl Child Education

Research has shown that girls are disproportionately affected by the accessibility to education. It is estimated that globally 132 million girls around the world are not in education (UNICEF). Some of the reasons as to why fewer girls are in education compared to boys are discussed below:

1. Cultural Beliefs and Patriarchal Values

In some cultures, girls' education is still completely forbidden. While boys are sent to school, girls' opportunities are reduced considerably to the role of giving birth, raising kids, and performing domestic work. These cultural beliefs are stuck within patriarchal traditions. It is not uncommon for families to invest in their son's education before investing in their daughters'. This is sometimes referred to as the 'son preference', an attitude that boys are more valuable than girls. This makes the girls lag behind in education.

In many rural communities it is often a cultural norm for girls to be forced to stay at home to contribute to household duties such as fetching water, cooking, looking after younger siblings and looking after other household chores rather than going to school. Here she loses decision making ability and power which would come with an education.

2. Poverty

According to the World bank, poverty is one of the most important contributing factors to a girls' education. In many rural areas, there may not be any direct school fees to pay but there is often a price parents have to pay by sending their child to school. These often include the cost of school uniforms, books, stationary, transport as well as the opportunity cost of missing out on labor opportunities and support around the home. When families cannot afford the cost of education, girls have a much higher likelihood of dropping out of school than boys. Girls often stay home to take care of younger siblings and bear the main burden of housework. This is linked to the traditional patriarchal gender roles and beliefs where boys are considered future breadwinners and girls are seen as caregivers.

3. Early child marriages

Early marriage and pregnancy play a part in the significant gender gap in education. According to UNICEF, an estimated 39,000 girls who are under the age of 18 are married every day. This shocking statistic is one of the reasons girls have

trouble staying in education. Once married, their role will be to stay at home and do domestic work causing a complete halt to their educational journey.

4. Schools are far away from home

Access to good schools can often be a struggle for families living in remote areas, with living closer to a town or city. It becomes an affordable option for parents. With limited transportation facilities, children are left with no choice but to walk for hours just to reach the school. To add to the struggle, with gender norms in the societies we live in, parents sometimes opt to keep their girls at home to protect them from dangers which she may encounter on her way to school. This makes the girls confine themselves to the four walls of the home.

NEED FOR THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

There is an urgent need to bring about awareness among parents towards the need for education of girls in the society. The researchers felt that teachers are the right choice to educate the parents and bring about awareness among parents and the villages on the advantages of girl child education to the family, society and the nation at large. In this context, the researchers felt the need to explore the attitude of teachers towards girl child education at secondary level. The present investigation is an attempt in this direction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the present study is to find out the factors affecting the attitude of teachers towards girl child education at secondary level.

The following are the other specific objectives of the present investigation.

- (i) To study the differences existing, if any in the attitude of male and female teachers towards girl child education at secondary level.
- (ii) To study the differences existing, if any in the attitude of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards girl child education at secondary level.
- (iii) To study the differences existing, if any in the attitude of Headmasters and School Assistants towards girl child education at secondary level.
- (iv) To study the differences existing, if any in the attitude of teachers working in Rural and Urban areas towards girl child education at secondary level.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards girl child education at secondary level.

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards girl child education at secondary level.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Headmasters and School Assistants towards girl child education at secondary level.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers working in Rural and Urban areas towards girl child education at secondary level.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is intended to know the influence of different demographic variables, viz., gender, age, designation and location of the institution on the attitude of teachers towards girl child education at secondary level.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to find out the attitude of 500 teachers (50 Headmasters and 450 School Assistants) working in the secondary schools located in rural as well as urban areas in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh towards girl child education at secondary level.

METHODOLOGY

Method: Since the study is intended to know the attitude of teachers in secondary schools, the researchers used **Descriptive Survey method** for the present investigation.

(a) **Sample:** The sample of the study consisting of 500 teachers (50 Headmasters and 450 School Assistants) has been taken from 50 selected secondary schools located in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh using **Stratified Random Sampling method**.

(b) Research Tool

The researchers used a well-prepared and standardized **questionnaire** consisting of 30 items as the tool of research for the present investigation.

(c) Administration of the Tool

The tool was initially administered to 50 teachers (5 Headmasters and 45 School Assistants) in Visakhapatnam city under Pilot study. The measures of reliability, validity and objectivity of the tool have been calculated. Further, the researchers conducted item analysis for the items included in the tool. Out of 34 items selected for the tool, the discriminating power of 30 items has been found positive and is negative in respect of 4 items. The items whose discriminating power is negative have been removed; and the final tool consists of 30 items, which are fool proof in all respects. The final tool has been administered to 500 teachers (50 Headmasters and 450 School Assistants) from the selected secondary schools in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.

(d) Statistical interpretation of data

The data collected has been analyzed using different statistical techniques such as Mean score values, Standard Deviations and t-ratios; and are presented in the following table.

Table showing t-values of different variables relating to Attitude of teachers towards girl child education at secondary level

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio/ F-value	Result
1	Gender	Male Female	250 250	100.02 97.46	27.94 28.57	1.01*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
2	Age	Below 40 years 40 years & above	380 120	100.18 99.83	29.31 27.80	0.12*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
3	Designation	Headmasters School Assistants	50 450	98.10 100.46	27.61 28.83	0.57*	* Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
4	Location of	Rural	260 240	99.35 99.67	28.29 27.72	0.13*	* Not Significant at 0.05 and

	the school	Urban					0.01 levels
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Findings of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Male and Female teachers towards girl child education at secondary level.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards girl child education at secondary level.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Headmasters and School Assistants towards girl child education at secondary level.
4. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers working in Rural and Urban areas towards girl child education at secondary level.

Conclusion

It is concluded that gender, age, designation and location of the institution have no influence on the attitude of teachers towards girl child education at secondary level.

Educational Implications

1. The study helps the teachers realize the need for girl child education at secondary level.
2. The study helps to make the parents understand the importance of education for the girl child in the family.
3. The study helps the teachers take responsibility in eradicating gender discrimination in education.
4. The study helps the school managements to provide necessary infrastructural and instructional facilities in the school taking into consideration the needs of the girl students in the school.
5. The study helps the administration take necessary measures to conduct public awareness programs with a view to make them realize the need for girl child education in the society.
6. The study helps to motivate the girls to continue their education on par with boys; and acquire necessary skills and competencies in order to make the nation strong.

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